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ABSTRACT

This document represents a plan for educational improvement within Alabama, and proposes the following four goals for higher education (2- and 4-year postsecondary institutions) in the state: collaboration, access, quality instruction, and research and economic development. Each goal is followed by specific, measurable objectives which serve as gauges for the State to measure progress. The plan that is presented focuses, not on how the State can help higher education, but rather on how higher education can enhance economic development and the quality of life of Alabamians. Discussed are the economic outlook, workforce demographics, and the education level of adults within the State. Also examined is the status of higher education in Alabama, the quality of instruction and research and economic development. It is noted that Alabama is characterized by several challenging paradoxes including vast human and natural resources but a relatively weak economy. Attaining the goals and objectives set forth in the plan is possible only through the combined efforts of education, business and industry, and government. Contains a 35-item bibliography. (GLR)

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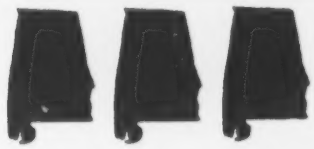
Investing in Alabama's Future:

State-Level Strategic Objectives for Higher Education



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Investing in Alabama's Future: State-Level Strategic Objectives for Higher Education

Adopted on August 30, 1991, by the
Alabama Commission on Higher Education
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The Alabama Commission on Higher Education was created by the Legislature in 1969 to coordinate public higher education in Alabama. The Commission is composed of 12 citizens who serve staggered nine-year terms. Ten members are appointed by the Governor, one by the Lieutenant Governor and one by the Speaker of the House. The Commission is responsible for the overall statewide planning and coordination of higher education in Alabama and for administering a variety of student aid programs.

Executive Summary

The purpose of this plan is twofold. First, the Alabama Commission on Higher Education seeks to facilitate informed decision making and policy formulation regarding scarce State resources. Second, the Commission hopes to establish a state-level framework for institutions to respond cooperatively and individually to the needs of the citizens of the State. This document is a plan for education improvement.

In its recent report, the Fifth Quadrennial Evaluation Committee highlighted the need for the Commission "to focus on a few important goals that will be energetically pursued as a priority" (p. 19). The Evaluation Committee recommended that the Commission seek support from educational, business, and political leaders to identify key goals and priorities that are important to state progress. To this end, the Commission proposes four goals for higher education in Alabama: collaboration, access, quality instruction, and research and economic development. Each goal is followed by specific, measurable objectives which serve as gauges for the State to measure progress.

This plan does not focus on how the State can help higher education but rather on how higher education can enhance economic development and the quality of life of Alabamians. The Commission recognizes that institutions have different missions and roles and that the goals and objectives of these institutions may or may not parallel the goals of the State. However, where there is convergence between institutional goals and state goals, the Commission anticipates that institutions with particular strengths will provide leadership to the State. The order of the goals and the objectives does not imply any assignment of priority. Every goal and objective is important to the State.

Many of the projects to be initiated under these goals and objectives will require additional funding. The Commission is committed to seeking increased funds from the Legislature and other appropriate sources in pursuit of these goals and objectives.

This plan is based on planning initiatives that the Commission has had underway for the last several years. "The Strategic Agenda" adopted by the Commission in 1990, the state-level policies adopted by the Commission in 1987-88, and the instructional role matrices adopted by the Commission during 1989-91 provide the framework for many of the goals and objectives included this plan. All of these planning initiatives were highly participatory activities which included much interaction with the institutions. Several recent reports also have contributed to the development of this plan, including the *Report of the Fifth Quadrennial Evaluation Committee*, the *Report of the Alabama Commission on Tax and Fiscal Policy Reform*, and *A Plan for Change: Report of the Alabama Education Study Commission*. The Alabama Educational Improvement Act of 1991 also provided a basis and context for the goal of collaboration.

Throughout this document reference is made to the term *higher education*. In this context, higher education includes all two-year and four-year postsecondary institutions in the State.

The Context For Higher Education Planning In Alabama

Planning for higher education cannot occur in a vacuum. Demographic conditions and trends for the state and southern region will impact directly and indirectly on two-year and four-year institutions of higher education.

Economy

The economic outlook for Alabama is uncertain. Historically, Alabama's economy has mirrored the national economy both in expansions and downturns (Center for Business and Economic Research, 1991). The Alabama Education Study Commission noted that Alabama's economy is changing rapidly and has become more volatile and less centralized. As a result of these changes, a dual labor market is emerging: the market for skilled and educated employees in which shortages will drive up incomes and multiply career opportunities, and the market for persons without skills in which job opportunities will decline.

Two economic factors are of utmost concern to higher education in Alabama. First, the unemployment rate in Alabama has exceeded the national rate for the last ten years. Although the gap between the two figures has narrowed somewhat, Alabama still has one of the highest unemployment rates in the nation (Alabama Department of Industrial Relations). Second, currently Alabama's per capita income is estimated to be 77.5 percent of U.S. per capita income, and that figure is projected to increase only slightly to 78.5 percent by 1995 (Center for Business and Economic Research, 1990).

These economic realities affect the ability of Alabama citizens to avail themselves of higher education opportunities available in the state's two-year and four-year institutions. For example, although tuition at Alabama colleges tends to be below regional averages, so is family income. According to data collected by Research Associates of Washington, the proportion of Alabama family income required to pay for tuition is nearly 40 percent higher than in other states in the region (Halstead).

This problem is particularly significant in view of Alabama's low support of student aid. Alabama's financial aid funding is 33 percent of the national per student average. The latest student aid data for Alabama, however, do show an increase in grant dollars per undergraduate enrollment from $77 in 1989-90 to $103 in 1990-91. The national average for 1990-91 was $314 (National Association of State Scholarship and Grant Programs).

Population and Workforce

The total population of Alabama is projected to increase by 4.6 percent from 1990 to 2000 (Marks). Most of Alabama's minority population is Black. In 1990, for example, the Black population in Alabama was approximately 25 percent, while the white population was about 74 percent. These proportions are expected to change only slightly. Blacks are projected to

comprise 25.8 percent of the State's population by the year 2000, while whites will account for 73.1 percent of the population (U.S. Dept. of Commerce).

Projections 2000: Alabama analyzes population and workforce estimates for the State:

> The workforce population (15-64 years of age) will continue to grow--but at a slower rate than previously.
>
> Two out of three people in Alabama will be working or looking for work in year 2000.
>
> Alabamians in the 25-54 year old group will continue to comprise the largest share of the population--both proportionately and numerically--and will grow at a faster rate.
>
> The share of population...
>
> ...15-24 years of age will decline.
>
> ...25-54 years of age will increase.
>
> ...55 and over will decrease slightly proportionately, but will increase 53,000 between 1985 and 2000.
>
> The proportion of whites in the workforce population will decrease slightly [to 74 percent]; the proportion of nonwhites will increase slightly [to 26 percent] (pp. 3-4, 6, 8).

The population and the workforce will continue to grow, although at a slower pace. For example, the rate of growth of the workforce for the 15 years immediately preceding the year 2000 will be one third of that of the previous 15 years (Alabama Department of Industrial Relations, ND). *Projections 2000: Alabama* also notes that Alabama is undergoing a shift from a goods-producing economy to a service-producing economy, and that this trend is reflected in employment projections:

> Services will grow at a faster rate than any other major industry division. It will also increase more numerically.
>
> The projected growth of the broad occupational groups shows the increasing need for education. Occupations in which a large proportion of workers have college training are among the fastest growing. Occupations in which a large proportion of workers have less than 4 years of high school are generally among the slowest growing.
>
> Workers with more education also earn more and are less likely to be unemployed (pp. 15, 26-27).

Education

According to the Alabama Education Study Commission, over 300,000 adults in Alabama lack the literacy skills to function effectively in their families or on the job. This problem is of

concern to educators as well as employers and workers because adults with low literacy skills cannot help their children with school work.

Students who do graduate from high school often find that they are not prepared for college or for the workforce. The Task Force on Education of the National Governors' Association stated in 1990 that "progress through school has more to do with accumulating seat time and course credits than with demonstrating required competencies." A recent study of the Southern region found that about one-third of first-time entering freshmen in public and private institutions enroll in at least one remedial course; that the course is most often mathematics; and that frequently these students also need extra help in reading and writing before they can begin "regular" college-level work. Although the percent varied by type of institution, even the most selective doctoral research universities averaged 25 percent of the freshman class enrolled in at least one remedial course (Abraham).

It is encouraging to note that the Alabama high school graduation rate in 1987-88 was 74.9 percent, slightly higher than the region or nation (Marks). However, the 52 percent of recent high school graduates in Alabama who go on to attend two-year and four-year institutions is still less than the national average of 53 percent (Marks), and Alabama ranks 48th in the percentage of heads of household (14 percent) with a college education (Corporation for Enterprise Development).

Educational achievement differs among racial groups. The nonwhite segment of the population in Alabama, approximately 98 percent of which is Black, is characterized by conditions which are not conducive to educational achievement, such as large households, broken families, crowded and substandard housing, and limited employment opportunities. The position of the Black male is of particular concern as this segment of the population ranks lowest in high school graduation and in the percentage of persons who complete four or more years of college. Whatever measure is applied, Blacks in Alabama rank significantly below whites in educational accomplishment; however, the gaps do appear to be diminishing somewhat (Bogie).

With regard to age, the student population has changed over the last two decades, both in the nation and in the state. Older students (age 25 and above) comprise a growing portion of postsecondary enrollment. Nationally, enrollment of older students increased 114 percent between 1970 and 1985, while the student population under age 25 increased only 15 percent (Center for Education Statistics). Older students are also a significant percentage of total enrollment in Alabama. According to the most recent data available, 31 percent of Alabama students in 1987 were at least age 25 and approximately 11 percent were 35 and older (IPEDS, 1987).

Status Of Higher Education In Alabama

Alabama higher education institutions, both two-year and four-year, are complex entities. Each institution exhibits sociocultural, economic, and political aspects that involve virtually all of the people of the state. For example, public higher education in Alabama directly employs over 30,000 persons (excluding hospital-related employment) with an average annual compensation of nearly $25,000. These institutions expend more than $1.9 billion annually. In some localities, a college is the dominant employer and spender.

Higher education in Alabama includes various types of institutions spread across the state: 15 public four-year; 1 public upper-division baccalaureate; 12 public community; 10 public junior; 17 public technical; 14 private four-year; 3 private junior; and many proprietary institutions.

Public higher education in Alabama is heavily used compared to other states. In July 1986, for example, Alabama's total population ranked 22nd in the nation; yet enrollment in public two-year and four-year institutions per 1000 persons ranked 8th. The people of Alabama respond to this demand for education by devoting scarce tax revenue to a degree which outweighs their relative wealth. However, the heavy use of Alabama's public higher education weights down teaching appropriations per student to a ranking of 20th.

Traditionally, higher education in Alabama has been predominantly public. Yet, the private sector plays a significant role. This sector includes traditional four-year and two-year colleges as well as many proprietary institutions offering specialized programs of postsecondary instruction. While the private segment (including proprietary institutions) represents the greatest number of institutions, the public two-year and four-year institutions enroll the majority of students in higher education in Alabama.

Throughout most of Alabama's history, higher education was provided largely by traditional, residential four-year institutions. In recent decades, a number of urban campuses have emerged, and Alabama has developed an extensive system of two-year community, junior, and technical colleges throughout the State. Today the two-year system enrolls the largest proportion of postsecondary students in the State. The three largest systems (Two-Year College System, The University of Alabama System, and the Auburn University System) enroll over 70 percent of public higher education students.

In general, institutions of higher education have carried on three primary functions: instruction, research, and public service. In Alabama as in other states, these functions affect not only the quality of education for Alabamians, but also the economic development of the state.

Quality Instruction

Academic excellence is the cornerstone of all institutions of higher education. Quality teaching and learning in academic programs is essential for students to develop the critical core of knowledge and analytical skills necessary to function effectively in a world of constant change.

Institutions of higher education in Alabama are committed to academic excellence and continually seek to improve the quality of academic offerings. For example, Alabama institutions use a variety of assessment techniques to measure the effectiveness of academic programs and to determine where changes need to be made. Such techniques include accreditation of programs, college-wide curriculum reviews, consultant reviews, various competency and major area exit examinations, standardized tests, alumni follow-up surveys, employer surveys, and surveys of transfers and non-returning students. Results of these and other assessment activities are used to identify strengths and weaknesses in programs and to effect desired improvements.

However, the quality of instruction in Alabama is threatened by scarce resources. During the 1980s, the average state appropriations per student in higher education did not keep pace with inflation and enrollments increased, particularly for part-time, nontraditional students. At the same time, higher education initiated new academic programs to respond to the needs of the State. As a result, the institutions were forced to do more with fewer resources through cost reductions and reallocations. Given that the possibility of tax reform and increased resources is uncertain, higher education faces critical challenges to maintain and improve the quality of programs and to continue to respond to societal needs.

Research And Economic Development

The link between public higher education and the private sector is critical to the development of a positive economic climate in the State. In *Dateline 2000: The New Higher Education Agenda*, Dale Parnell describes a New Economic Development Triangle which includes the two-year institutions; state colleges, research universities and organizations; and public-private employers and labor groups. These groups, working together, form the linkages between higher education and the economy necessary to address human resource development, research, technology transfer, economic development, and curriculum reform (Parnell).

The Alabama Commission on Higher Education, working with the universities and other state agencies, has encouraged greater cooperation and support for the research and service mission of higher education in Alabama to further enhance a positive economic climate in the State. Several initiatives reflect the cooperation that has existed for several years and has resulted in national recognition for the State.

The Alabama Small Business Development Consortium (ASBDC) is a consortium of 10 service centers located at colleges and universities throughout Alabama. The centers serve as a resource providing information, counseling, and assistance to individuals who plan to start a small business, or who are presently operating small businesses. Education and training opportunities covering a wide range of business topics and basic and applied research data are provided for decision making purposes. ASBDC also serves as a clearinghouse by referring clients to other existing business programs, such as those sponsored by the U.S. Small Business Administration, the Chamber of Commerce, and many educational institutions and private organizations. The objective of ASBDC is to improve the economic quality of life in

Alabama through the development of new small businesses and the expansion of existing enterprises.

The State of Alabama established the Alabama Universities/TVA Research Consortium (AUTRC) to encourage cooperative research among scientists, engineers, and economists at member public universities and TVA. A major purpose of AUTRC is to convert research into commercial applications for use in existing or new industries and businesses in the state. The stated objectives of the project include a) improving and maintaining the viability of rural areas in Alabama; b) maintaining, developing or expanding fisheries, recreation, and tourism on Alabama reservoirs; c) using organic resources more fully; d) increasing the effective use of forested and marginal agricultural lands; e) increasing efficiency in the manufacture, use, and application of fertilizers; f) rendering waste safe for disposal or reuse; g) fostering other economic development projects that will contribute to the well-being of Alabama.

In 1986, Alabama was one of eight states awarded a $3 million grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF) to stimulate the quality of its research and the ability of its scientists to compete for federal research contracts. Through this program, known as the Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR), Alabama scientists at participating universities have an opportunity to become nationally competitive for research funds. The specific goals of EPSCoR are a) to effect a permanent increase in the NSF competitiveness of Alabama's basic research programs in targeted areas, b) to enhance research areas which already have strength and which are closely related to special needs of Alabama, c) to provide the basis for continuing expansion of basic research in Alabama in the post-EPSCoR era, and d) to mobilize the talents of the Alabama EPSCoR universities and others to improve science and mathematics education and literacy at all levels in the state.

Other cooperative efforts include the Governor's Residential Industry Development Initiative, an economic development linkage between the Commission, the Alabama Development Office, and the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs; the Alabama Council for Engineering Education, an advisory group of executives from Alabama-based industries and federal agencies; and the Alabama Supercomputer Authority, a public corporation authorized by the Legislature to enhance the quality of academic scientific research and support economic development. These and other cooperative endeavors will continue to provide ways to maintain and improve the quality of the research and service missions of the universities. These efforts will no doubt have a strong positive economic impact.

Goals For Higher Education In Alabama

The Alabama Commission on Higher Education promulgates four goals for the 1991-1995 planning period which focus on ways higher education can help the State to improve economic development and the quality of life for its citizens. These goals are **collaboration, access, quality instruction,** and **research and economic development.** Specific state-level objectives have been established to provide indicators of progress toward the achievement of the goals.

Through the state-level objectives, this plan establishes benchmarks for the State to measure progress toward the goals, not standards that each institution must meet. There is no debate that institutions have different missions and roles and that the goals and objectives of these institutions may or may not parallel the goals of the State. However, where there is convergence between institutional goals and state goals, the Commission anticipates that institutions with particular strengths will provide leadership to the State. Even in those areas where individual institutions have no parallel objectives or goals, the Commission is hopeful that individual faculty talent can be utilized.

Collaboration

Partnerships and academic alliances must be formed between and among elementary and secondary education (including parent participation) and two-year and four-year institutions to improve the education of Alabama students at all levels. Education is a system in which the public and private educational institutions and the business sector should collaborate in such areas as increasing student retention at all levels, enhancing preparedness for college, enriching programs for gifted students, improving articulation among education levels, developing standards, and improving counseling programs. High schools; junior, community, and technical colleges; and universities should form alliances which recognize the important contribution of all educational sectors and encourage sharing of ideas and resources. For example, programs such as tech-prep allow high school juniors to begin a structured and closely coordinated high school-college curriculum which includes a solid base of applied science and math, literacy courses, and technical programs and leads to an associate degree or two-year certificate. Such joint efforts will ensure that Alabama students have access to the best possible education for the next century.

Collaboration: Objective 1

The Alabama Commission on Higher Education will work with the colleges and universities and the Alabama State Board of Education to increase the proportion of recent high school graduates in Alabama who enroll in two-year and four-year institutions to exceed the national average by 1998.

Rationale: The proportion of recent high school graduates in Alabama who subsequently enroll in two-year and four-year institutions is approximately 52 percent, compared to the national average of 53 percent (Marks). This figure includes the first-time entering freshmen who graduated from public or private schools within the previous 12 months and who enrolled in two-year and four-year institutions offering associate or higher degrees. It is important that an increasing number of Alabama high school graduates take advantage of higher education opportunities. The projected growth of broad occupational groups shows an increasing need for education. Persons with higher levels of education are more likely to be employed and to have higher than average incomes.

Ref: *Goals 4 and 5, "The Strategic Agenda"*
SREB, Challenge 2000, *p. 13*
National Governors' Association, Educating America, *pp. 10-11*
Alabama Education Study Commission, A Plan for Change, *pp. 2, 27-28, 39*
SREB Fact Book on Higher Education 1990, *p. 31*
Goal 7, AACA "Goals for the 1990's"
The Alabama Education Improvement Act of 1991

Collaboration: Objective 2

The Alabama Commission on Higher Education will work with the Alabama State Board of Education; the Alabama State Department of Education; the Alabama Department of Postsecondary Education; the universities; representatives of the K-12 school system;

business and industry; state government; and other agencies with an interest in adult education to explore new ways to deliver a curriculum that meets the needs of adult students by 1995.

Rationale: Adults in the age range 25 through 34 will comprise the largest segment of Alabama's population in the year 2000. It is in the State's best interest to encourage adults to avail themselves of educational opportunities, including literacy/remedial studies as well as studies leading to college degrees to improve their abilities to compete in a volatile job market, and to enhance the State's economic well-being. It may be necessary to modify traditional curriculum designs and delivery modes to encourage the participation of adults who have work and family responsibilities.

Ref: Projections 2000: Alabama
1989 Development Report Card for the States
Alabama Education Study Commission, A Plan for Change, *pp. 36-39*
Goal 7, AACA "Goals for the 1990's"
America 2000, *pp. 19-20*
The Alabama Education Improvement Act of 1991

Collaboration: Objective 3

The Alabama Commission on Higher Education will encourage and support efforts by the Alabama State Board of Education and the universities to establish through the revision of existing programs and the development of new certification programs experimental alternative approaches to teacher and school administrator certification by 1993.

Rationale: In addition to having an adequate command of subject matter, it is important that teachers and school administrators have adequate background in teaching methodology, tests and measurements, principles of educational psychology, and human development. However, there are means of acquiring this background other than graduating from formal teacher education programs. Graduates from programs other than education programs should be encouraged to enter teaching or school administration. These candidates should satisfactorily complete the requirements of the clinical program with flexibility provided in course requirements. Candidates completing alternative certification programs should be expected to pass any tests required of other candidates for certification.

Ref: SREB, Challenge 2000, *p. 15*
National Governors' Association, Educating America, *p. 28*
Alabama Education Study Commission, A Plan For Change, *pp. 12-17*
Goal 9, AACA "Goals for the 1990's"
America 2000, *p. 4*
The Alabama Education Improvement Act of 1991

Collaboration: Objective 4

The Alabama Commission on Higher Education will explore with the Governor, the Boards of Trustees, the legislature, the business community, and institutional representatives by 1991 the feasibility of establishing a biennial Governor's Conference on Higher Education to

discuss major issues facing higher education in the State and to identify methods of economically and effectively addressing these issues.

Rationale: Many of the problems facing the State are issues which need to be addressed collectively by different agencies and groups. The Governor's Conference on Higher Education will provide a forum for focusing attention on these issues and for encouraging cooperative approaches to their solutions. This conference would convene the major participants in developing public policy for higher education: the Governor, the Boards of Trustees, the Alabama State Board of Education, selected members of the legislature, and selected members of the business community.

Ref: Goal 4, "The Strategic Agenda"

Access

Each resident of Alabama will be provided with the opportunity to achieve the benefits of higher education (two-year and four-year) programs most appropriate to his/her needs and abilities.

Access: Objective 1

The Alabama Commission on Higher Education will work with the colleges and universities to increase the number of degree completions by full-time traditional-age students in two-year and four-year institutions so at least 50 percent of those students who begin will finish within 150 percent of the normal time for completion of or graduation from specific programs by the year 2000.

Rationale: It is important that students complete two-year and four-year programs in a timely manner. A dropout or stopout at this level is a major loss to the State. It has been estimated that only 41 percent of freshmen entering four-year colleges have earned a bachelor's degree after six years. The dropout rate for freshmen at community colleges is even higher (Samuelson). Institutions should be encouraged to put more emphasis on timely degree completion. The Student Right-To Know Act (P.L. 101-542) passed by the 101st Congress requires that all colleges and universities disclose the proportion of full-time degree-seeking students graduating within 150 percent of the normal time for completion or graduation from specific programs (for example, completing a four-year program in six years). Schools awarding athletic scholarships must provide more details on student athletes' persistence and graduation rates.

Ref: *Goal 9, "The Strategic Agenda"*
Student Right-to-Know Act
SREB, Challenge 2000, *p. 13-14*
National Governors' Association, Educating America, *p. 11*
Goals 7 & 15, AACA "Goals for the 1990's"

Access: Objective 2

The Alabama Commission on Higher Education will encourage all senior institutions to have articulation agreements with at least one associate degree institution by 1995.

Rationale: Unnecessary duplicated costs of instruction for the student or the state cannot be supported. Faculty of the four-year and two-year institutions should develop articulation agreements at the local level so comparability is ensured for transfer students. Several senior institutions have already made substantial progress in this area, such as the Computer Based Articulation Program which provides immediate computer access at all junior and community colleges in Alabama to a transfer curriculum guide and optional contract for all of the majors and programs offered at participating institutions.

Ref: *Goals 4, 5, and 9, "The Strategic Agenda"*
SREB, Challenge 2000, *p. 13*
National Governors' Association, Educating America, *p. 26-27*

Access: Objective 3

The Alabama Commission on Higher Education will work with the legislature to increase grant program funding by the year 2000 in order to decrease significantly students' dependence on loans to meet their educational costs, particularly during the first two years of college-level study.

Rationale: In the last decade, loans have replaced grants and scholarships as the major source of funds for students to meet their educational costs. Alabama's grant aid funding is one-third of the national per student average, although the latest student aid data for Alabama show an increase in grant dollars per undergraduate enrollment from $77 in 1989-90 to $103 in 1990-91. The national average for 1990-91 is $314.

Alabama's socially and economically disadvantaged youth are considered "at risk" -- unlikely to complete high school and less likely to pursue college education. It is in the state's interest to motivate "at risk" students to complete a strong curriculum, graduate from high school, and avoid drugs and crime. Alabama should establish a program which encourages its disadvantaged youth to become taxpayers instead of tax burdens. College scholarship incentives that include drug-free/crime-free stipulations could serve as incentives for low-income and "at risk" high school students who might otherwise drop out of school rather than pursue their college education.

Ref: *Goals 7 & 11, "The Strategic Agenda"*
SREB, Challenge 2000, *p. 13*
Alabama Education Study Commission, A Plan For Change, *p. 34*
Report of the Fifth Quadrennial Evaluation Committee, *pp. 13, 26*

Access: Objective 4

The Alabama Commission on Higher Education will work with the legislature to establish by 1993 a mechanism that will ensure that Alabama students enrolled in the state's private, nonprofit colleges and universities receive grant funds consistent with the legislative intent of Acts 1978, 2nd Ex. Session, No. 90.

Rationale: Alabama law allows eligible students at private higher education institutions to receive $1,200 per academic year, although funding for FY 91 was at $888 per eligible student and will be lower for FY 92. The state of Alabama is not unique in providing assistance for students attending private institutions. Virtually all states include private higher education in their student aid subsidy programs (Education Commission of the States); and one-third (16) of all states offer direct tuition equalization grants (student grants to offset the cost differences between public and private colleges) to students attending private institutions (National Association of State Scholarship and Grant Programs). Over half (26) of all states offer specific purpose grants and contracts (e.g., stipends for engineering programs, research grants, wildlife research, health programs, assistance to dental schools) to private

higher education institutions; six of these states also provide general purpose direct grants to private higher education institutions (Education Commission of the States).

Ref: *Goals 7 & 11, "The Strategic Agenda"*
SREB, Challenge 2000, *p. 13*
Report of the Fifth Quadrennial Evaluation Committee, *pp. 13, 26*
ECS, The Preservation of Excellence in American Higher Education, *p. 70-94*
Code of Alabama, Sec. 16-33A-3.
National Association of State Scholarship and Grant Programs

Access: Objective 5

The Alabama Commission on Higher Education will work with the Alabama State Board of Education, the institutions, the business community, and the legislature to increase significantly the participation of Blacks in higher education so that by the year 2000: a) at least 30 percent more who enter as freshmen will earn baccalaureate degrees; b) at least 30 percent more two-year transferees will earn baccalaureate degrees; c) at least 50 percent more will earn doctorates; and d) at least 25 percent more faculty and administrators will be employed.

Rationale: Black citizens comprise approximately 25 percent of the State's population. However, they make up a smaller percentage of the enrollment and of the graduates, faculty, and administrators in higher education in the State. Improving the Black participation rate in higher education in the State will not only improve the quality of life for this segment of the population but will also contribute to the overall economic improvement of the State.

Ref: *Goals 4, 5, & 7, "The Strategic Agenda"*
SREB, Challenge 2000, *p. 13*
SREB, Educational Benchmarks 1990, *pp. 3, 29, 32*
National Governors' Association, Educating America, *pp. 11, 27*
Goals 3 & 4, Education That Works: An Action Plan for the Education of Minorities, *p. 8*
Goal 7, SHEEO, A Difference of Degrees, *p. 46.*
LFO Summary, FY 1991-92 University Budget Hearings
Goal 7, AACA "Goals for the 1990's"

Access: Objective 6

The Alabama Commission on Higher Education will complete by 1993 a study of nonresident tuition policies in other states, explore the ramifications of reciprocity agreements with neighboring states, and make recommendations to the Boards of Trustees and the Legislature for any adjustments in existing policies on those matters which it may deem advisable.

Rationale: Tuition for nonresidents is a concern of the Alabama Commission on Higher Education. The Commission seeks to insure that nonresident students pay their "fair share" of education costs and that Alabama taxpayers are not bearing an undue burden in this area. To address this concern, in 1988 the Commission recommended that each institution of higher education (two-year and four-year) voluntarily adopt a 2 to 1 ratio between nonresident and

resident tuition rates. The Commission plans to explore the possible ramifications of engaging in reciprocity agreements with neighboring states and to make recommendations to the Boards of Trustees and the Legislature for adjustments in existing policies.

Ref: ACHE Tuition Policy, November 1988

ACHE Meeting March 1991, Motion by Commissioner Pizitz

Access: Objective 7

The Alabama Commission on Higher Education will work with the four-year and two-year institutions of higher education, the Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind, the Vocational Rehabilitation Service, the Alabama State Board of Education, the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, the Council for the Blind, and other groups involved in providing services and programs to the sensorially and physically impaired and the learning disabled to increase the access these individuals have to higher education opportunities by 1995.

Rationale: Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 states:

> No otherwise qualified handicapped individual in the United States ... shall, solely by reason of his handicap, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. [29 U.S.C. sec. 794, as amended by Section 111(a) of the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1974]

In order to comply with this regulation and in order to increase the access the sensorially and physically impaired and the learning disabled have to higher education, all four-year and two-year institutions of higher education will be encouraged to support services and programs including, but not limited to, technological assistance, interpreters, readers, and tutors.

Ref: Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973

Access: Objective 8

The Alabama Commission on Higher Education will work with four-year and two-year institutions of higher education to develop a statewide policy regarding remedial/ developmental courses by 1993.

Rationale: According to recent studies, including the Southern Regional Education Board's report on access, about one-third of the first-time freshmen who come to college find themselves enrolled in at least one remedial course. "Among public institutions, these students are just about as likely to be enrolled at four-year colleges as they are in two-year colleges . . . Even the region's most selective doctoral/research universities have their share . . . Some states have firm policies about access and placing new students. Freshmen in those states are more likely to be placed in remedial courses." Alabama does not have a statewide policy in this area.

Ref: Abraham, They Came to College?

The Alabama Department of Postsecondary Education

Quality Instruction

Institutions of higher education (both two-year and four-year) must continue to provide high quality programs of instruction.

Quality Instruction: Objective 1

The Alabama Commission on Higher Education will work with the institutions by 1992 to explore the need for external standards of educational performance at appropriate points in the undergraduate curriculum.

Rationale: Currently, states in the southern region use two types of standardized tests to measure student achievement: criterion-referenced tests and norm-referenced tests. "Criterion- referenced tests (CRT) are developed by each state to determine whether students have attained an identified standard or level of mastery in the specific skill areas identified by educators in the state as being essential for success. State-by-state comparisons of CRT results are not possible because each state designs its own test to reflect its curriculum goals and the standard or level of mastery varies from state to state . . . Norm-referenced tests (NRT) are developed by private testing companies to measure general student achievement in broad content areas, based on a nationwide review of textbooks and curriculum guides" (Korcheck). External standards of educational performance will assure business and industry, state government, and the citizens of the State that students who attend Alabama institutions reach specified standards of excellence.

Ref: *Goal 9, "The Strategic Agenda"*
SREB, Challenge 2000, *p. 14*
Korcheck, Measuring Student Learning

Quality Instruction: Objective 2

The Alabama Commission on Higher Education will work with the institutions to prepare a biennial report by 1995 which describes ongoing and planned institutional assessment of the quality of instructional programs with particular emphasis on assessment programs which focus on improving lower division mathematical and writing skills.

Rationale: The Alabama Commission on Higher Education, the public, and the Legislature are often unaware of the many efforts the institutions have underway to evaluate their educational programs, as well as how the results of the assessments are used. A biennial report on assessment will provide a mechanism for sharing information on how the quality of programs is assessed and improved. Mathematical and writing skills are critical to prepare an educated workforce capable of adapting to change. Programs which incorporate mathematical and writing skills throughout the curriculum enhance students' abilities to function competitively in the job market.

Ref: *SREB*, Challenge 2000, *p. 14*
National Governors' Association, Educating America, *pp. 23, 25*
Report of the Fifth Quadrennial Evaluation Committee, *pp. 22-24*
Goals 8, 9 & 10, AACA "Goals for the 1990's"

Quality Instruction: Objective 3

The Alabama Commission on Higher Education will work with the Alabama Department of Postsecondary Education and the institutions to improve the existing state-level data system by 1996.

Rationale: The public investment in Alabama higher education (two-year and four-year institutions) is significant. In 1990-91, the state appropriation for all higher education purposes exceeded $800 million. Maintaining effectiveness in the emerging global society will demand timely and precise state-level information concerning resource need and use. Improvements in the state-level data system will provide data needed to support the policy, planning and management information needs of all levels of decision makers. It will provide the framework for responding to recurring, routine data needs and also will be a flexible tool for dealing with nonroutine information needs in a timely manner. The existing state-level data system is based on aggregated data collected through the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) and other supporting surveys. While this data source is useful for many kinds of analyses, it cannot support certain data needs, such as determining transfer rates of Alabama students.

Ref: *National Governors' Association,* Educating America, *pp. 23, 25*

Report of the Fifth Quadrennial Evaluation Committee, *pp. 22-24*

Quality Instruction: Objective 4

The Alabama Commission on Higher Education will work with the governor's staff, the legislature, institutional representatives, and the business community to attain 100 percent of regional standard funding for all public institutions by 1996.

Rationale: The regional standard represents the level of funding required to achieve average ranking among the 15 Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) states. For years the level of funding provided to Alabama higher education has been below regional averages. Achievement of 100 percent of the regional average will set the stage for new goals of funding adequacy.

Ref: *Goals 1 and 2, "The Strategic Agenda"*

SREB, Challenge 2000, *p. 20*

Report of the Alabama Commission on Tax & Fiscal Policy Reform

Report of the Fifth Quadrennial Evaluation Committee, *pp. 20-22, 25-26.*

Goal 16, AACA "Goals for the 1990's"

Quality Instruction: Objective 5

The Alabama Commission on Higher Education will conduct studies with state agencies, the proprietary sector, and other groups that have interest in the higher education services provided by for-profit institutions.

Rationale: Due to the increasing number of school closures as well as new federal regulations governing the student loan program, there is an imperative need to reevaluate the

system of oversight that now exists in the State and to consider revisions to the current Alabama Private School Licensure Law (Act No 80-272).

Ref: Goal 4, "The Strategic Agenda"

Quality Instruction: Objective 6

The Alabama Commission on Higher Education will work with the Alabama State Data Systems Management Division, the Alabama Supercomputer Network Authority, the institutions, and the business community to develop a plan to install a state-of-the-art high speed, high capacity telecommunications network supporting voice, data, and video transmission which will connect the state's institutions, other state agencies, and the business community by 1997.

Rationale: Telecommunications technology offers an unparalleled opportunity to overcome distance and time to deliver educational services and resources. A statewide telecommunications network linking institutions of higher education promises to enhance human potential and economic vitality by providing a vehicle for scholarly communication, instruction to distance locations, and access to information resources. The use of telecommunications to provide distance education opportunities has been recognized by the Alabama legislature. Bills such as 1991 Legislative Session H.B. 188 Telecommunications Based Educational Opportunity Program recommend the establishment of a Commission on Telecommunications Based Education. Colleges and universities in Alabama are beginning to explore and utilize technology more fully to deliver educational services to a broader segment of the population. A process to facilitate cooperation could be very beneficial to the State.

Ref: Goal 8, "The Strategic Agenda"

National Governors' Association, Educating America, *p. 24*

Alabama Education Study Commission, A Plan For Change, *pp. 21-22*

Quality Instruction: Objective 7

The Alabama Commission on Higher Education will work with the Network of Alabama Academic Libraries, the Department of Postsecondary Education, the Alabama Public Library Service, the Alabama Library Association, and the business community to plan and implement a linked electronic library system that will enable any Alabama resident to query and retrieve information from any library or workstation by 1997.

Rationale: The quality of information resources available for education and research, and for making daily decisions, are a significant factor in the economic, social, and cultural lives of a state's residents. Without adequate access to library resources and services, the citizens of Alabama are deprived of timely information needed for education, research, economic development, and for making decisions affecting their daily lives. Plans for economic development must recognize that existing deficiencies in information are handicapping efforts to place Alabama in a more competitive position nationally. Alabama lacks sufficient funds to erase current deficiencies and must utilize innovative means to maximize access to existing information resources regardless of where they are held in the

state. Further, national efforts to implement the National Research and Education Network, a state-of-the-art telecommunications backbone to advance education and research, will only succeed if states implement programs that will enable their citizens access to the national information resource.

Ref: Parkhurst, Library Perspectives on NREN

Quality Instruction: Objective 8

The Alabama Commission on Higher Education will seek the cooperation and involvement of the business community, the legislature, and the institutions in the development by 1995 of incentives for encouraging a more focused role and scope for each institution and the identification of resources needed to enhance specialty areas.

Rationale: According to the Fifth Quadrennial Evaluation Committee, the existing roles and missions of the four-year institutions in Alabama are not greatly differentiated from each other. In its report, the Evaluation Committee noted that the State of Alabama would benefit from more differentiated roles for the institutions through an increase in quality of programs and the economies associated with specialization, consolidation, or elimination of smaller programs. However, the Evaluation Committee pointed out that increased mission differentiation and specialization will not occur without Commission encouragement and rewards. "The Commission should seek the advantages for Alabama of a more differentiated system of higher education by first working with the institutions to develop unique roles, and second, to obtain resources needed to enhance the specialty areas" (p. 26). A regular cycle of funding analysis and study will ensure optimum linkage between needs of the State for higher education services and the delivery programs provided by state-supported institutions of higher education. As Alabama higher education continues to mature, financial resources must be expanded as well as shifted from declining activities to those of emerging priorities.

Ref: Goals 1 and 2, "The Strategic Agenda"

SREB, Challenge 2000, *p. 20*

Report of the Alabama Commission on Tax & Fiscal Policy Reform

Report of the Fifth Quadrennial Evaluation Committee, *pp. 20-22, 25-26.*

Quality Instruction: Objective 9

The Alabama Commission on Higher Education will present for legislative consideration a set of capital funding recommendations based on specific project needs, including equal consideration for existing education and general (E&G) facilities bonded indebtedness, rather than an institution by institution allocation by 1995.

Rationale: Adequate facilities are essential to the viability of an institution. If an institution is to address its facilities needs adequately, a cyclical capital funding mechanism is necessary in order to facilitate effective facility planning. A focus on specific projects rather than institutional distributions will assure that monies are directed toward the most urgent projects and that statewide concerns are being addressed.

Ref: Goal 3, "The Strategic Agenda"

ACHE Resolution on Capital Funding, March 1987

Quality Instruction: Objective 10

The Alabama Commission on Higher Education will work with the public institutions of higher education to develop definitions, criteria, and procedures to determine rationale for establishing new units of instruction, including new institutions and units within existing institutions.

Rationale: Recent and pending proposals to merge or consolidate institutions or to create new institutions raise many issues. A systematic approach to determining the rationale for such proposals will assist the Commission in fulfilling its statutory responsibility for reviewing new units of instruction and will promote the more effective use of limited state resources.

Ref: *Act 79-461*

Commission Recommendations (Adopted December 5, 1989) for the study of the:

1) Need for Associate Level Programs in Senior Institutions;

2) Effectiveness of Existing Joint and Cooperative Programs; and

3) Status of Branch Campuses as They Relate to the Role of Main Campuses.

Research And Economic Development

Institutions of higher education (both two-year and four-year) must provide programs and services which are responsive to the needs of society.

Research And Economic Development: Objective 1

The Alabama Commission on Higher Education will work with all public senior institutions to develop a Centers of Research Excellence program for the State by 1993.

Rationale: Alabama must target its resources for selected research programs that have potential to grow and flourish in an effort to stimulate the growth of high innovation industries. The Commission will work with the institutions to identify those research areas which have potential for the State.

Ref: The University of Alabama System

Research And Economic Development: Objective 2

The Alabama Commission on Higher Education will work with the Governor and the Legislature to make technological leadership a state priority by 1995 by a) providing enhanced stipends for graduate school candidates in science and engineering; b) fully funding and expanding the Eminent Scholars Program to include Professorships; c) fully funding the EPSCoR program which will create an infrastructure enhancement initiative as well as a competitive grants program; d) implementing a matching fund program to encourage universities to purchase and replace scientific equipment; and e) providing capital funding for new research facilities.

Rationale: In order to build strong research programs, it is necessary to enhance the research infrastructure in higher education in the State.

Ref: The University of Alabama System

Research And Economic Development: Objective 3

The Alabama Commission on Higher Education will work with the institutions, the Alabama Development Office, and the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs to assess the role, scope, and mission of economic development activities at the institutions and to develop a coordinated statewide delivery system for such services by 1994.

Rationale: Without cooperation in economic development activities, valuable state resources may be ignored. A coordinated approach will allow the state to award limited research and service funds to institutions with a proven track record and/or unique resources. This approach will also enhance the ability of the state to attract business and industry.

Ref: Goal 6, "The Strategic Agenda"

Economic Development Recommendations Presented to the Commission by Governor Hunt in Letter, 6/14/90

Research And Economic Development: Objective 4

The Alabama Commission on Higher Education will work with the legislature and institutions of higher education to provide research support and analysis on current issues facing committees of the House and Senate by 1992.

Rationale: The Legislative Reference Service and Legislative Fiscal Office provide staff support to the 140 member legislature. To enhance the legislature's ability to access all the state's analytic resources, the Commission will develop a program to make the expertise in higher education more readily available to the legislature. This program will capitalize on the research and analytical skills of faculty and staff.

Ref: Goal 6, "The Strategic Agenda"

Summary

Alabama is characterized by several challenging paradoxes. The state has vast human and natural resources, yet it has a relatively weak economy. It is a state with a strong work ethic, yet it has more than its share of social and economic problems and ranks poorly on several quality of life ratings. Alabama maintains an extensive and complex array of two-year and four-year institutions, yet only about one in ten of its citizens possesses a baccalaureate degree. These contrasting elements strongly suggest that Alabama is a state with great unrealized potential.

The Alabama Commission on Higher Education believes that striving to fulfill the goals and objectives put forth in this document offers the best hope for Alabama's future. The title of the document, "Investing in Alabama's Future," was deliberately chosen. By any comparison, regional or national, higher education in Alabama is underfunded. Yet, the Commission is not asking the State to increase the level of funding for colleges and universities in an irresponsible manner. The Commission has attempted to pinpoint areas in which funds for higher education can be used as an investment in the lives of Alabama citizens. The aim is to provide the best higher education services to the most people possible in a manner that will strengthen the economy and enhance the general quality of life.

Attaining the goals and objectives of this plan is possible only through the combined efforts of education, business and industry, and government. Cooperation and interaction of the highest order will be necessary. The challenge is great, but the potential rewards are even greater.

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